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EDITORIAL DIRECTIVE

Prepared by the Official Records Editing Section

To: Members of delegations of Member States and all those concerned with drafting or editing United Nations documents

Subject: USE OF THE WORD "SESSION" IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The purpose of this directive is to serve as a reminder of the meaning of the term "regular session" of the General Assembly.

2. Article 20 of the Charter of the United Nations states: "The General Assembly shall meet in regular annual sessions and in such special sessions as occasion may require".

3. Rule 1 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly states: "The General Assembly shall meet every year in regular session commencing on the third Tuesday in September;" and rule 2 states: "On the recommendation of the General Committee, the General Assembly shall, at the beginning of each session, fix a closing date for the session." Accordingly, depending on what the General Committee decides, the annual session of the Assembly, that is, its regular session, covers a period running from September of a given year to September of the following year.

4. With the exception of those cases in which the distinction between regular and special sessions must be stressed, it is therefore not necessary, when referring to the annual session of the General Assembly, to specify that it is a regular session.

5. During a session, the Assembly may, under rule 6 of the rules of procedure, "decide ... to adjourn temporarily and resume its meetings at a later date".

6. In such a case, if one is referring to the period which runs from September to December of the same year, that is, the first four months of a given session, the use of the expression "the main part of the [ordinal number] session" is

recommended. If meetings are resumed during the same session between January and September of the following year, the following expressions should be used, depending on the circumstances: "during its resumed [ordinal number] session" or "during the first part of its resumed [ordinal number] session".

7. The Main Committees of the General Assembly do not meet in sessions. According to rule 99 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, they meet during the session of the Assembly as may be necessary to complete the consideration of the items referred to them and they choose a date for the conclusion of their work. The use of the word "session" should therefore be avoided when referring to the work of a Main Committee. If the Assembly decides that, at a specific time during its annual session, a Main Committee should resume its consideration of an agenda item or a question, the expression "at subsequent meetings in [month, year]" of the Committee should be used.

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